

(singing in foreign language) (speaking in foreign language) (gentle organ music) (singing in foreign language) (speaking in foreign language) (music stands clattering)

- Good morning. We welcome you to this service of worship here in Duke University Chapel. We have been called to worship, led by our guest choir from Wroclaw, Poland. Our choir sang in Wroclaw when we made our tour of Poland and we welcome these friends to our place of worship. Their director is Andrzej Kosendiak. We also welcome our students back from the fall break, and we welcome all of those alumni who are in reunion here with us this weekend. Let us stand for the greeting. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- The risen Christ is with us.

- Praise the Lord. (stately organ music) ♪ O worship the King, all glorious above ♪ ♪ O gratefully sing God's power and God's love ♪ ♪ Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days ♪ ♪ Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise ♪ ♪ O tell of God's might, O sing of God's grace ♪ ♪ Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space ♪ ♪ Whose chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form ♪ ♪ And dark is God's path on the wings of the storm ♪ ♪ The earth with its store of wonders untold ♪ ♪ Almighty, thy power hath founded of old ♪ ♪ Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree ♪ ♪ And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea ♪ ♪ Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite ♪ ♪ It breathes in the air, it shines in the light ♪ ♪ It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain ♪ ♪ And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain ♪ ♪ Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail ♪ ♪ In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail ♪ ♪ Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end ♪ ♪ Our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend ♪

- Let us pray. Eternal God, we gather as your people to worship you. By your Spirit, break the bonds that hold our minds captive to the petty concerns of our lives, that we may know the freedom of new possibilities. Quiet the din of our distracted spirits that we may hear your gentle voice calling us. Transform our very lives, that we may go forth from this hour with a deeper commitment to follow you. In the name of Christ we pray, amen. You may be seated. (congregation shuffling)

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination.

All: Open our hearts and minds, God, by the power of your Holy Spirit so that, as the Word is read and proclaimed, we might hear your words with joy this day, amen.

- The Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Job, chapter 42, verses one through six and verses 10 through 17. Then Job answered the Lord, "I know that you can do all things, "and that no purpose of yours

can be thwarted. "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?" "Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, "things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. "Hear, and I will speak. "I will question you, and you will declare to me." "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, "but now my eye sees you. "Therefore I despise myself, "and repent in dust and ashes." And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house. They showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. The first he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all of the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days. This is the Word of the Lord.

- Thanks be to God.

- The psalm appointed for this Sunday is number 34, found on pages 769 and 770 in your hymnal. Let us praise God together in singing the psalm and the Gloria responsively. Please rise. (stately organ music) ♪ I will bless the Lord at all times ♪ ♪ God's praise shall continually be in my mouth ♪ ♪ My soul makes its boast in the Lord ♪ ♪ Let the afflicted hear and be glad ♪ ♪ O magnify the Lord with me ♪ ♪ And let us exalt God's name together ♪ ♪ I sought the Lord, who answered me ♪ ♪ And delivered me from all my fears ♪ ♪ Look to God and be radiant ♪ ♪ So your faces shall never be ashamed ♪ ♪ The poor cried out, and the Lord heard ♪ ♪ And saved them out of all their troubles ♪ ♪ The angel of the Lord encamps ♪ ♪ Around those who fear God ♪ ♪ And delivers them ♪ ♪ O taste and see that the Lord is good ♪ ♪ Happy are those who take refuge in God ♪ ♪ O fear the Lord, you his holy ones ♪ ♪ For those who fear God have no want ♪ ♪ The young lions suffer want and hunger ♪ ♪ But those who seek the Lord lack no good thing ♪ ♪ Come, O children, listen to me ♪ ♪ I will teach you the fear of the Lord ♪ ♪ Which of you desires life ♪ ♪ And covets many days to enjoy good ♪ ♪ Keep your tongue from evil ♪ ♪ And your lips from speaking deceit ♪ ♪ Depart from evil, and do good ♪ ♪ Seek peace, and pursue it ♪ ♪ The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous ♪ ♪ The ears of the Lord hear their cry ♪ ♪ The face of the Lord is against evildoers ♪ ♪ To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth ♪ ♪ When the righteous cry for help the Lord hears ♪ ♪ And delivers them out of all their troubles ♪ ♪ The Lord is near to the brokenhearted ♪ ♪ And saves the crushed in spirit ♪ ♪ Many are the afflictions of the righteous ♪ ♪ But the Lord delivers them ♪ ♪ The Lord keeps all their bones ♪ ♪ Not one of them is broken ♪ ♪ Evil shall slay the wicked ♪ ♪ And those who hate the righteous will be condemned ♪ ♪ The Lord redeems the life of his servants ♪ ♪ None of those who take refuge in God will be condemned ♪ ♪ All glory be to you, Creator ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ our Savior ♪ ♪ And to the Holy Spirit as Trinity ♪ ♪ As it was ere time began ♪ ♪ Is now and will be forevermore ♪

- Please be seated. (congregation shuffling)

- Our epistle lesson today is from the Book of Hebrews, chapter seven, verses 23 through 28. It reads as follows. Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from

continuing in office, but he who holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people. This he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. This is the Word of the Lord. Let us say thanks be to God.

All: Thanks be to God. (gentle organ music) (singing in foreign language)

- We have been living, this year here in the chapel, with Mark's gospel. And perhaps by now, in Mark's gospel, if you've been here on a regular basis, you have heard just about enough of these miraculous healings that Mark so loves to relate. Oh, this sort of thing was most impressive when we first encountered it in Capernaum, and yet Mark keeps reporting the ways that Jesus' power miraculously overflows and releases people. There is Simon's mother-in-law, with a fever. The reaction of the populace could have been predicted. Once word spreads about Jesus' healing ability, crowds flock from everywhere. There is the leper who is cured from Galilee. There is the roof-destroying friends of the paralytic that they let down through the roof to Jesus. There is the man with the withered hand. There is the demoniac of Gerasene, and on and on. And by this time in October, if I have anything to say about all of these healings, I've already said it. And yet, today, here is another. The healing of the blind son of Timaeus. They came to Jericho, and as he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to keep quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him over here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart, get up, he's calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said, "My teacher, let me see again." So Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and he followed him on the way. This is the Word of the Lord.

- Thanks be to God.

- Jesus speaks to this blind beggar, "What do you want me to do for you?" And you wish that some time in the Bible you could know the tone of voice that Jesus used. You wonder, how did he speak it? What do you want me to do for you, now? Sigh, well, here's another. A demon to be released, sickness to be cured, a feverish mother-in-law. Name it, what can I do for you? But of course, what is ministry in Jesus' name if it isn't doing good for people? Turn on Sunday morning TV, as I did this morning, and there a host of proclaimers of the good news that you can come to Jesus and you can get fixed of what ails you. Our friends from Poland here today reminds me of that, the cold January day we spent at Czestochowa, the great shrine of the Black Madonna, the most sacred spot in Poland. And there in the shrine, the walls are encrusted with crutches and eyeglasses and other implements of people who were once enslaved to some debilitating illness or infirmity, and they came there and they were delivered. I teach here at the seminary, the divinity

school, and when asked, well, why are you going into the Christian ministry, I know this is one of the predominant responses from the seminarians. I like to help people. Just like Jesus, my job as a pastor is to reach out to people who hurt or who are in pain. It was earlier in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his own disciples, "Go out and cast out unclean spirits. Heal the sick." Disciples do what Jesus does. We help people. And so Jesus says, "What do you want me to do for you?" The last place that I helped people, before I came here to help people, I remember there was a bulletin, a billboard that I had to pass every day on my way to my office at the church. And on this billboard, there was this disgustingly good-looking pastor. And he was smiling, he was holding a Bible. And one week it would say, anxious? Call this church. Next week, depressed? Call this church. Need a friend, call them. Each week there was some different human malady that you could get fixed by coming to this church. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks Bartimaeus. Our church was talking about what we could do for good, and we didn't consult scripture, we didn't pray and ask God to tell us what we ought to be doing. No, we devised a questionnaire. And we took it door to door and we asked people, "Tell us what you need." This is the where does it itch style of Christian ministry. You tell us where we itch, you tell us what your needs are, and the church exists to scratch it. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks. "Teacher, let me receive my sight," says Bartimaeus. And chalk up another miracle. No matter what you need doing, Jesus can fix it. He healed the blind, he made the lame to walk. What he's done for others, he can do for you. Isn't this what religion is all about? Getting your needs met? I well remember, in the early days of my ministry, going to a preacher's conference and it was presided over by a well known television evangelist. And he proclaimed, "God wants to meet "every need in your life. "Whatever your heart desires, "bring that to the Lord in prayer." And then, he illustrated his conviction of divine beneficence by telling a story about a woman in his church, who, unable to find her favorite pair of red shoes, prayed to God and, voila! There were her shoes, right under the bed, where she had left them. What do you want God to do for you? "We're leaving this church," they said, "It just doesn't meet our needs." And they left. After all, when the YMCA doesn't have an adequate softball program, wouldn't you leave? If the supermarket refuses to stock your favorite kind of cabbage, you go to another. "I'm just not getting fed by your sermons, pastor," he said, "And isn't that your job?" And he left. Pastoral care consists of doing nice things for people. And yet it's tough to meet my needs, I have found. You and I live within a national polity, the Constitution, which says to me that I have a right to get my needs met. I have a right, I am given maximum amount of space to go out and get my needs met. And yet the problem with that is the Constitution never tells us which needs are worth having. And we have demonstrated in our own age that the trouble with this arrangement is that alas, my desires quickly get jacked up to the level of needs, and my needs get further elevated to the level of rights, and the difficulty is that my desires are just limitless. When I go and speak to pastors at convocations and pastors' schools, this is my theory for why so many of them look so tired, because they experience the people in their churches as just bottomless pits of desire labeled as need. My last congregation, we decided to do evangelism. We got a church growth consultant. He came in and said, "Go out into your neighborhood "and find out what people need." And so we gave out the questionnaire, we went out there. And he said, you go and meet those needs. Churches grow where they meet people's needs. And I remember, people came back and said somebody wanted a ceramics class. Somebody else had heard of a church that offered free blood pressure testing, dog obedience course. The church is where you meet your felt needs. What do you want me to do for you? Here's my question. What happened to all those people that Jesus helped? Where were they for the remainder of Mark's gospel? That demoniac who completed successful psychotherapy in a moment, the mother-in-law who now registered

98.6, those whose bellies were now full after being at Jesus' table? Now, what one might think they might have stayed around for the rest of the story. No. They are nowhere to be found on Tough Thursday or Good Friday. I remember in a Bible study class, someone was saying, "Why did Jesus perform so many miracles?" And someone said, "Well, this is the way he got people "to become part of his program, to join up, "to become disciples," and someone muttered, "Well, if that was his intention, it didn't work." Jesus is on the way, in the Gospel of Mark, he's on the way, you know where he's on the way to? He's on the way to his cross. And it appears that few wanted to go that way. Few, except for Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, the one who could see now, we are also told, is the one who followed. Commentators have long wondered why is it that we are given the name of this blind beggar out of all the others. Why isn't he introduced the way Mark usually introduces these people, as somebody's son-in-law, or a man who couldn't walk, or a person with an issue of blood, or a certain man who was blind from birth? Why do we have his name, Bartimaeus, why is his name alone remembered, recalled, out of all the others in the story? Bartimaeus. Maybe because, as this story was being told in the early church, maybe Bartimaeus was there. Maybe there were people there who remembered old Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, you all know Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus, Sunday School superintendent over at Rocky Creek? Yes, he was one, he was one who was healed. Yes, he was healed, but more than that, he followed. Bartimaeus, alone out of all the hurting, oppressed, victimized, suffering folk, the hungry ones Jesus healed and fed, Bartimaeus becomes a disciple. And so he is rightly remembered by name. As Jesus said, it's your faith that makes you well. It's your ability to see, and there is a sense that Bartimaeus sees even before his sight is restored, he sees what Jesus is really about. Years ago, I remember meeting a man who had come up the hard way, and yet through a loving mother, and through encouraging teachers, and a great scholarship at the university, he was now established in an affluent neighborhood as a very successful attorney. And a couple of people from our church asked him, on one occasion, to take the case of an indigent young man who had run into trouble with the law. And this now rich, but once poor attorney told me when he said he would not take the young man's case, he said, "You know, I have thought from time to time, "I really ought to go back "and do something for those less fortunate. "But I've had to work so hard to get where I am, "and I am so glad to be out of my old neighborhood "and all the poverty there, "that I think it's just high time for me "to enjoy it a little bit." And I can understand him, can you not? I can understand why all those lives that had once been so debilitated by illness of various kinds, now healed, and they thought that it was maybe high time for them to do a little living, to look after themselves for a change, to enjoy the fruits of their new good health. I can understand why they left others to bear the burdens of discipleship, others could follow Jesus. I tell you, that this story of the healing and the response of Bartimaeus, the last thing said in the pericope is, he followed. I think this story is put here to make each of us ask ourselves, what do I want from Jesus? What am I looking for? That was the question Jesus put to Bartimaeus. What do you want from me? We look to Jesus and see him as solution to all of our problems, freedom from aches and cares, a magic wand waved over my life to fix everything and set me up. This story makes us ask, is Jesus my Lord, or my errand boy? Are we his faithful followers or only his pestering clients? Perhaps the most insightful, faithful question we could ask is, Jesus, what do you want from me? We were discussing some of these issues the other night in a dormitory, and someone, we were talking about how suffering teaches us things and that we learn from even the bad times in life, and someone said, "Well, what do you do "if you were fortunate to grow up "in a wonderful home and you've had a lot of opportunities "and you're here at the university, "and you've never really known real suffering? "What do you do?" And someone there spoke up and said, "I spent last semester in Calcutta. "There's no way to sit here tonight

"and say I have not known suffering "unless you were determined to live "on a very small island of success. "You need to open up your eyes." We have a vision problem. All of us tend to suffer from myopia. We just can't see much further than our needs. Bartimaeus, this blind beggar, whose name we still remember, he sees the most important words in this story are not, well, what do you want me to do for you? It's the words, and immediately he received his sight and he followed on the way. (gentle organ music) ♪ How can we name a love ♪ ♪ That wakens heart and mind ♪ ♪ Indwelling all we know or think ♪ ♪ Or do or seek or find ♪ ♪ Within our daily world, in every human face ♪ ♪ Love's echoes sound and God is found ♪ ♪ Hid in the commonplace ♪ ♪ If we awoke to life built on a rock of care ♪ ♪ That asked no great reward ♪ ♪ But firm, assured, was simply there ♪ ♪ We can, with parents' names, describe, and thus adore ♪ ♪ Love unconfined, a father kind ♪ ♪ A mother strong and sure ♪ ♪ When people share a task ♪ ♪ And strength and skills unite ♪ ♪ In projects old or new to make ♪ ♪ Or do with shared delight ♪ ♪ Our friend and partner's will is better understood ♪ ♪ That all should share, create, and care ♪ ♪ And know that life is good ♪ ♪ So in a hundred names, each day we all can meet ♪ ♪ A presence, sensed and shown at work ♪ ♪ At home, or in the street ♪ ♪ Yet every name we see shines in a brighter sun ♪ ♪ In Christ alone is love full grown ♪ ♪ And life and hope begun ♪

- The Lord be with you.

- And also with you.

- Let us pray, you may be seated. (congregation shuffling) O God of the Spirit that lives and moves among us, we have heard of all that you are doing in the world. We've heard that you made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the lepers to be cleansed, the deaf to hear, the dead to rise, and the poor to rejoice with good news. We've come to see what all the fuss is about. We've come laden with lists of things we want you to do for us. Forgive us for our consumer mentality and self-centeredness. Lord, in your mercy--

- Hear our prayer.

- You have invited us to ask you openly for what we need, but you also taught us to seek first your kingdom, knowing that all that we need will be added to us. Help us to trust that you know our concerns and desire our good. It isn't necessary for us to clammer for your attention. You will provide for us all that is needed. Remind us that your first concern is to give us the authentic life that comes from following you. Soften our hard-necked resistance and melt our frozen hearts, that we might turn to you with nothing held back, desiring to follow wherever you lead. Lord, in your mercy--

- Hear our prayer.

- As you sent Jesus Christ to be our savior, so you also send us out to act as he would act in the world. You have anointed us to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. There are so many in our world who are in need of the good news that we've been given. There are so many who are looking for the way that leads to life. As you touch our lives in concrete ways, help us also reach out to others with concrete expressions of love and hope. Let us be faithful disciples who lead others to new life in you. Lord, in your mercy--

- Hear our prayer.

- Let us offer the good news of food, medicine, and clean water to the refugees in Rwanda. Let us work for peace in Haiti, Israel, and Yugoslavia. Let us offer compassionate assistance to the people of Poland and Russia as they rebuild their economies. Let us offer a way out of crime, addiction, and poverty in the ghettos of America. These and more stand in need of your healing power and our loving outreach. Open our eyes to see what you see. Strengthen us with your love, as you send us forth in love, that we might follow you into all the places you would have us go. In all things, help us faithfully follow the Christ whom we serve, amen. Let us offer ourselves and our gifts in thanksgiving to the Lord. (gentle organ music) (singing in foreign language) (majestic organ music) ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise God all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Praise God above ye heavenly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪

- Let us pray. Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, we bring our offerings with thanksgiving for all your mercies. We pray that you will teach us to render to you all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise you, not with our lips only, but with our whole lives, turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our days into a living sacrifice to you, through our savior, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together saying--

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen. (stately organ music) ♪ Sing praise to God who reigns above ♪ ♪ The God of all creation ♪ ♪ The God of power, the God of love ♪ ♪ The God of our salvation ♪ ♪ With healing balm my soul he fills ♪ ♪ And every faithless murmur stills ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ The Lord is never far away ♪ ♪ But through all griefs distressing ♪ ♪ An ever present help and stay ♪ ♪ Our peace and joy and blessing ♪ ♪ As with a mother's gentle hand ♪ ♪ God gently leads the chosen band ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ Thus all my toilsome way along ♪ ♪ I sing aloud thy praises ♪ ♪ That earth may hear the grateful song ♪ ♪ My voice unwearied raises ♪ ♪ Be joyful in the Lord, my heart ♪ ♪ Both soul and body bear your part ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ Let all who name Christ's holy name ♪ ♪ Give God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ Let all who own his power proclaim ♪ ♪ Aloud the wondrous story ♪ ♪ Cast each false idol from its throne ♪ ♪ For Christ is Lord, and Christ alone ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪

- The grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (majestic organ music)
(congregation chattering)